THE DARK AVENGER VS. THE CHICAGO MOB!
THE Shadow STRIKES!
SHADOW STRIKES
13
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by
Gerard Jones
&
Eduardo Barreto

WITH JOHNNY DC

Shazam! It was announced at the Chicago Comic Convention that **John Byrne** would follow his work on the OMAC Prestige Format miniseries with a Captain Marvel series. John's version of Billy Batson, Mary Batson, the old Wizard and the usual gang has already got people at the offices very excited. John has been calling editor **Jonathan Peterson** regularly with ideas and suggestions and many of them update the series without altering its charm or mood. John has even gone so far as to do a painting of Captain Marvel and Mary Marvel just to show his further commitment to the project. Look for both OMAC and SHAZAM! in 1991 . . .

Among other big doings at the Con was a hush-hush meeting between Editor **Mike Gold** and **Denys Cowan, Shea Anton Pensa, Mike Baron,** and **Mike Grell**. They have something cooking for 1991 and it has people curious and not a little bit anxious. Denys and Shea got together after Shea inked Denys's layouts on GREEN ARROW #39. The combination is very attractive; check it out. Denys will also pencil issue #41. As for #40, that one was so special, Mike Grell himself wanted to pencil and ink the story, in addition to painting the cover! . . . Mike and his studio-mate **Dameon Willich** made a barnstorming visit to the offices in early June. They met with editors, were taken to a fancy lunch, and discussed projects ranging from GREEN ARROW to AVATAR to something involving . . the Warlord..

Also making a quick appearance at the offices were the writing couple of **John Ostrander** and **Kim Yale**. They came to 'own to talk business on a variety of projects, new and old. The duo spent a fruitful lunch hour with former SUICIDE SQUAD editor **Bob Greenberger** and his faithful successor **Dan Raspler**, planning the double-size 50th issue, coming at year's end. A few weeks later, Kim returned on her own to meet with Mike Gold and no one is sure what's up . . .

Roger Stern will be leaving STARMAN with issue #28, to concentrate on a new project for next spring. New writer **Len Strazewski** will make his debut with #29 . . . **Marv Wolfman** will be leaving DETECTIVE COMICS with #627 and **Pete Milligan** will step in for at least six issues. Pete is eager to do more with the Caped Crusader after his successful three-parter this summer . . . As for TEC #627, it marks 600 issues of Batman headlining the series. To celebrate, **Denny O'Neil** has a special four-story tribute planned, with details to come . . .

Andy Helfer and **Mike Hoffman** step in to handle SWAMP THING #101, allowing **Doug Wheeler** a breather after the extra-sized #100. Mike will also stick around to pencil a few more issues since he enjoys the character . . . **Tom Mandrake** will pencil and ink ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS #23 and then ink #24, over the pencils of his wife, **Jan Duursema . . .**

Neil Gaiman dropped into New York to meet with his American publisher of *Good Omen*, the novel he co-wrote with fantasist **Terry Pratchard**. He also visited with editor **Karen Berger** to discuss plans for Sandman and the forthcoming BOOKS OF MAGIC . . . Also visiting was **Kevin Maguire**, arriving from Florida for the wedding of Marketing's **Roe Blauvelt**, which we hear was a fine affair . . .

John Moore and his writing partner **Howard Chaykin** have signed on as story editors for CBS's *The Flash* TV series, which makes its debut any day now . . . The pair visited the DC offices in early June to talk about some of their various projects, including the soon-to-be-released TWILIGHT, the book that will finally make **José Luis Garcia-Lopéz** a household name . . .

Denis Rodier paid a visit to the offices in early June, as well, checking in with editor **Dan Raspler** on the status of THE DEMON. At the June New York Convention, Denis was united with his DEMON penciller, **Val Semeiks**, and they sat at a table signing autographs and discussing Hell with all comers . . . By the way, keep your eyes open for the all-singing issue of THE DEMON, as the dialogue is written to hummable tunes from pop culture. It's sure to be one of the oddest titles we release this year . . . Another of Dan's artists, **Geof Isherwood**, came to the city unexpectedly in June. Geof is having a great time with the SUICIDE SQUAD, he says, and it looks like it . . .

Bob Pinaha spent part of July conducting a lettering seminar at Shore Leave, a convention in Baltimore. Normally a *Star Trek* con, the audience has had a larger number of comics fans attend and as a result, Bob figured he can start teaching tomorrow's talents. He says he had a ball with the event and looks forward to repeating it . . .

Marty Pasko, our beloved friend, married **Judith Faye Silinsky** in late Spring. They had a fine wedding and are having a wonderful life together. Now, if only Marty could find the time to write some more books for us . . .

Sam Kieth, co-creator of SANDMAN, dropped by the offices in early summer and spent some time renewing acquaintances. To his delight, he finally had a chance to meet **Malcolm Jones III**, his steady inker on those early issues. The two huddled and compared notes and exchanged praise . . . Sam is busily working on *Epicurus the Sage Book Two* for our sister company, Piranha Press . . .

Colleen Doran will pencil and ink WONDER WOMAN #49, allowing **Jill Thompson** a chance to jump ahead on the extra-size anniversary issue, #50 . . . Newcomer **Michael Adams** will pencil CAPTAIN ATOM #46, finishing a two-parter by writer **Greg Weisman**, which guest-stars Superman. Michael will be back on other books in the future . . . **Sarah Byam** has written issue #47, which was pencilled by regular artist **Rafael Kayanan . . .**

The DC Editors spent part of May and June meeting with Editor-in-Chief **Jenette Kahn** and Editorial Director **Dick Giordano**. A good number of the meetings had the editors listening to plans drawn up by **Jonathan Peterson, Denny O'Neil,** and **Archie Goodwin**. Lists were drawn up, names bandied about, ideas suggested and rejected and, when all was said and done, it looks like a plan has emerged for the 1991 Annuals (already?). The thing of it is, everyone seems *very* excited about the resolution and that means good times ahead for everyone. Details will be revealed . . . soon.

More . . . next month!

—Johnny DC

DC LIST THIS WEEK

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What is Lar Gand's connection to the Legion? What happened to the Academy? And who is Kent Shakespeare and why is he fighting the Persuader? ◆▶

HAWKWORLD 6
Katar battles the evil in his subconscious as he attempts to regain control of the Thanagarian ship Byth has managed to steal. ◆▶

FLASH 44
A week in the life of the Flash begins with Wally fighting impossible odds to save a dying man, and ends with a battle with Velocity 9 junkies. ●

JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA 44
Well-armed men in black suits want the secrets of the JLA from Wally Tortolini, who fights back with his hard-won armaments. ●

SUPERBOY 10
Superboy must go back into the deadly wasteland of the Phantom Zone to get his super-powers back . . . with the help of Lex Luthor. ●

WONDER WOMAN 48
The secret of the New Titans Villain Scourge is revealed as Wonder Woman and Troia battle strange creatures in New York's sewer system. ●

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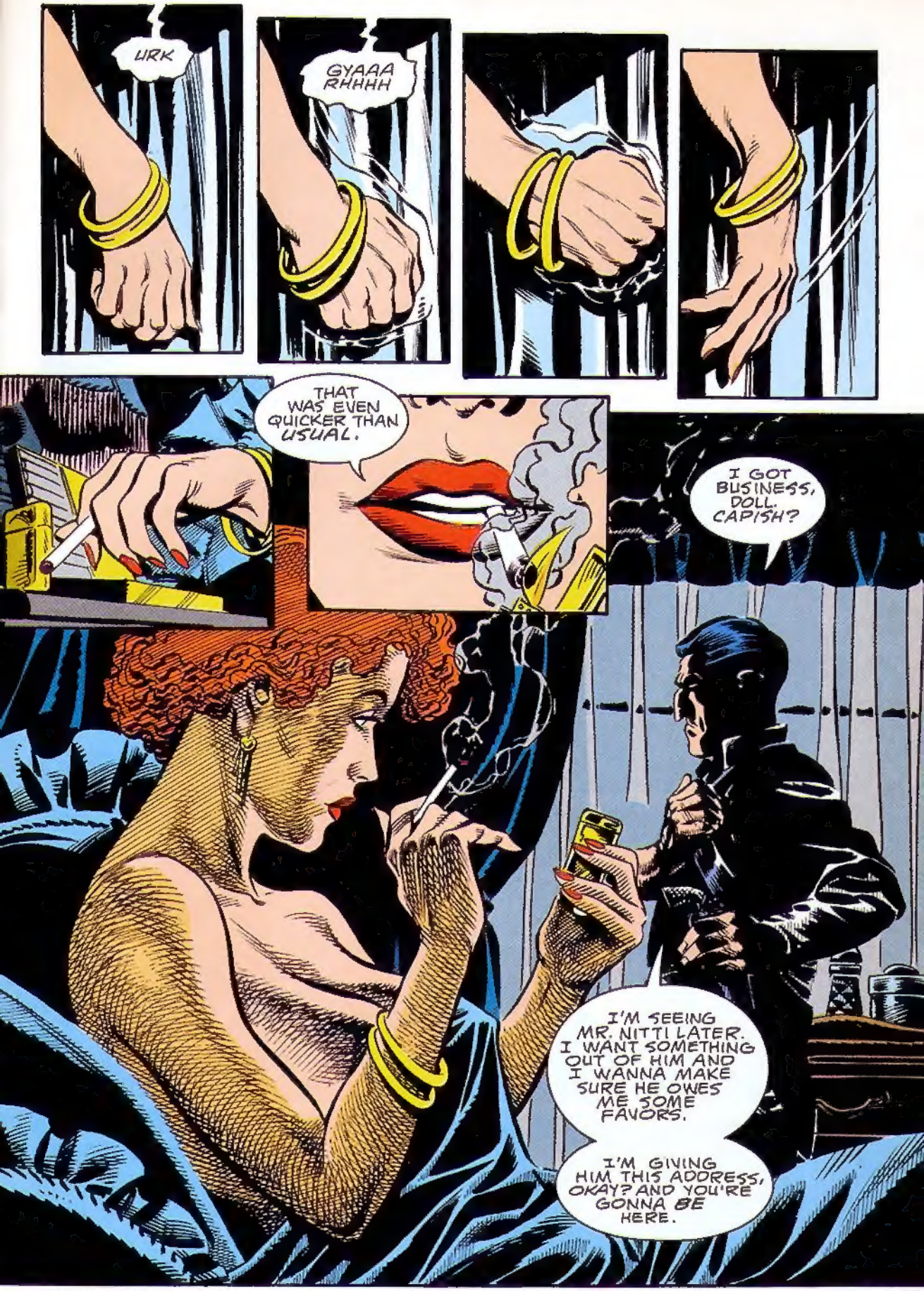
URK
GYAAA RHHHH
THAT WAS EVEN QUICKER THAN USUAL.
I GOT BUSINESS, DOLL. CAPISH?
I'M SEEING MR. NITTI LATER. I WANT SOMETHING OUT OF HIM AND I WANNA MAKE SURE HE OWES ME SOME FAVORS.
I'M GIVING HIM THIS ADDRESS, OKAY? AND YOU'RE GONNA BE HERE.

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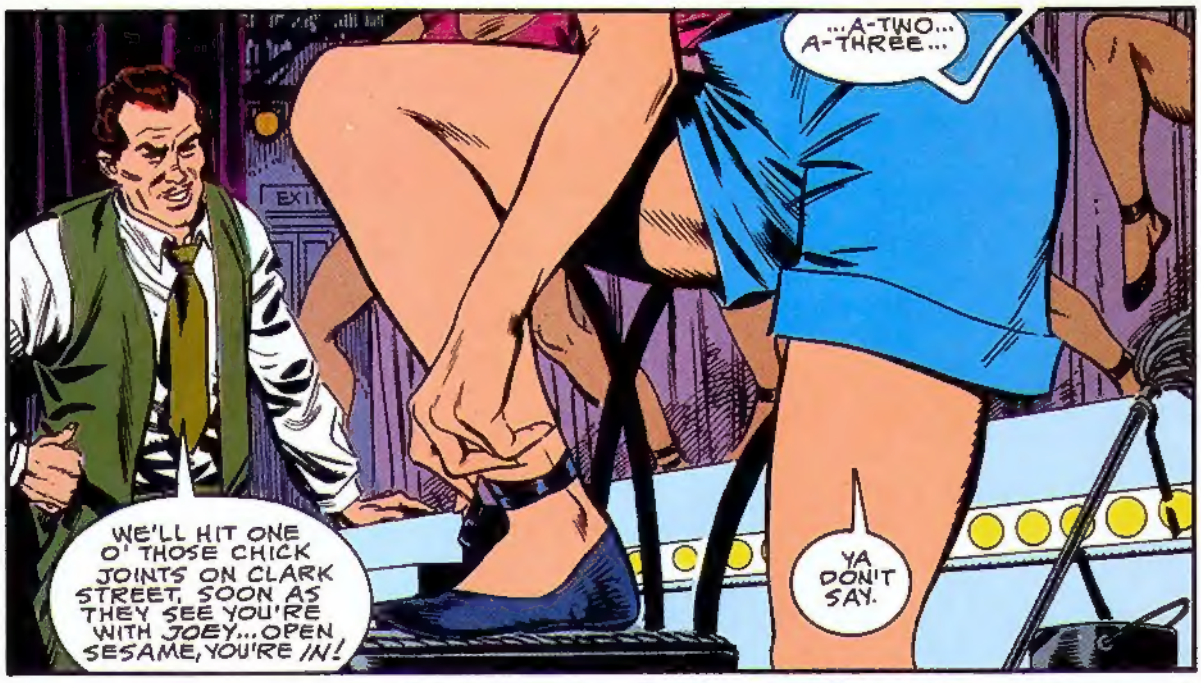
HEY, WAIT A SECOND! YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST PASS ME AROUND LIKE A--
I'M IN A FAMILY, GIRLIE. WHEN ONE MEMBER OF A FAMILY GETS SOMETHING, HE SHARES IT.
SO WHAT AM I, JUST SOMETHIN' YOU "GOT"? IF YOU THINK YOU OWN ME, HALF-STEP, YOU--
KRAAK
DON'T CALL ME HALF-STEP.
THE BOYS CALL ME HALF-STEP. NOBODY ELSE. I GOT THIS LIMP FOR THE BOYS. FOR THE FAMILY. NOT FOR YOU.
YOU DON'T TALK ABOUT MY LIMP.
BUT YOU REMEMBER --THE JOB THAT GAVE ME THIS LIMP--
THAT'S WHAT'S PAYIN' YOUR RENT.
I'LL REMEMBER...
...ANTHONY.
2


...A-TWO... A-THREE...
EXIT
WE'LL HIT ONE O' THOSE CHICK JOINTS ON CLARK STREET. SOON AS THEY SEE YOU'RE WITH JOEY... OPEN SESAME, YOU'RE IN!
YA DON'T SAY.

ONLY THING IS--MY ROADSTER'S IN THE SHOP.
YA DON'T SAY...
SO I'M FIGURING WE BETTER USE YOUR CAR. I KNOW A HIGH-CLASS HOOFER...
...LIKE YOU'S... GOTTA HAVE A CHARIOT.

SURE, I GOT A CAR, JOEY...
...ONLY RIGHT NOW IT'S ON MY YACHT, SAILIN' TO MY CASTLE IN ITALY.
YOU MUST BE JOEY O'HARA.

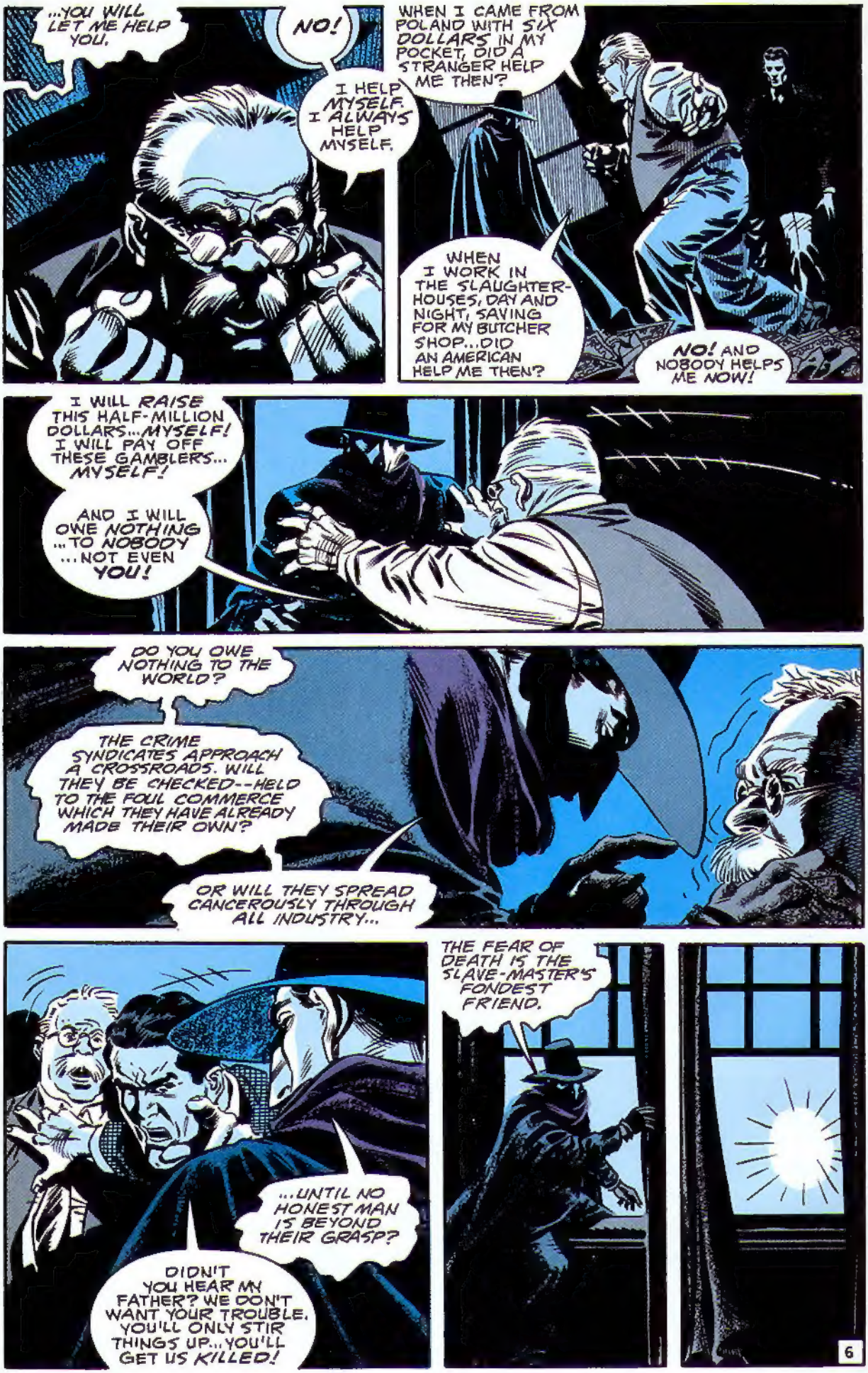
I'M CHICK HECK, WITH THE CHICAGO NEWS SERVICE. AND I GOT A HUNCH YOU CAN HELP ME.
THAT'S WHAT I LIKE--A GIRL WHAT GIVES BACK AS GOOD AS SHE GETS.
THAT'S HOW YA CAN TELL SHE FEELS THAT WAY ABOUT YA.

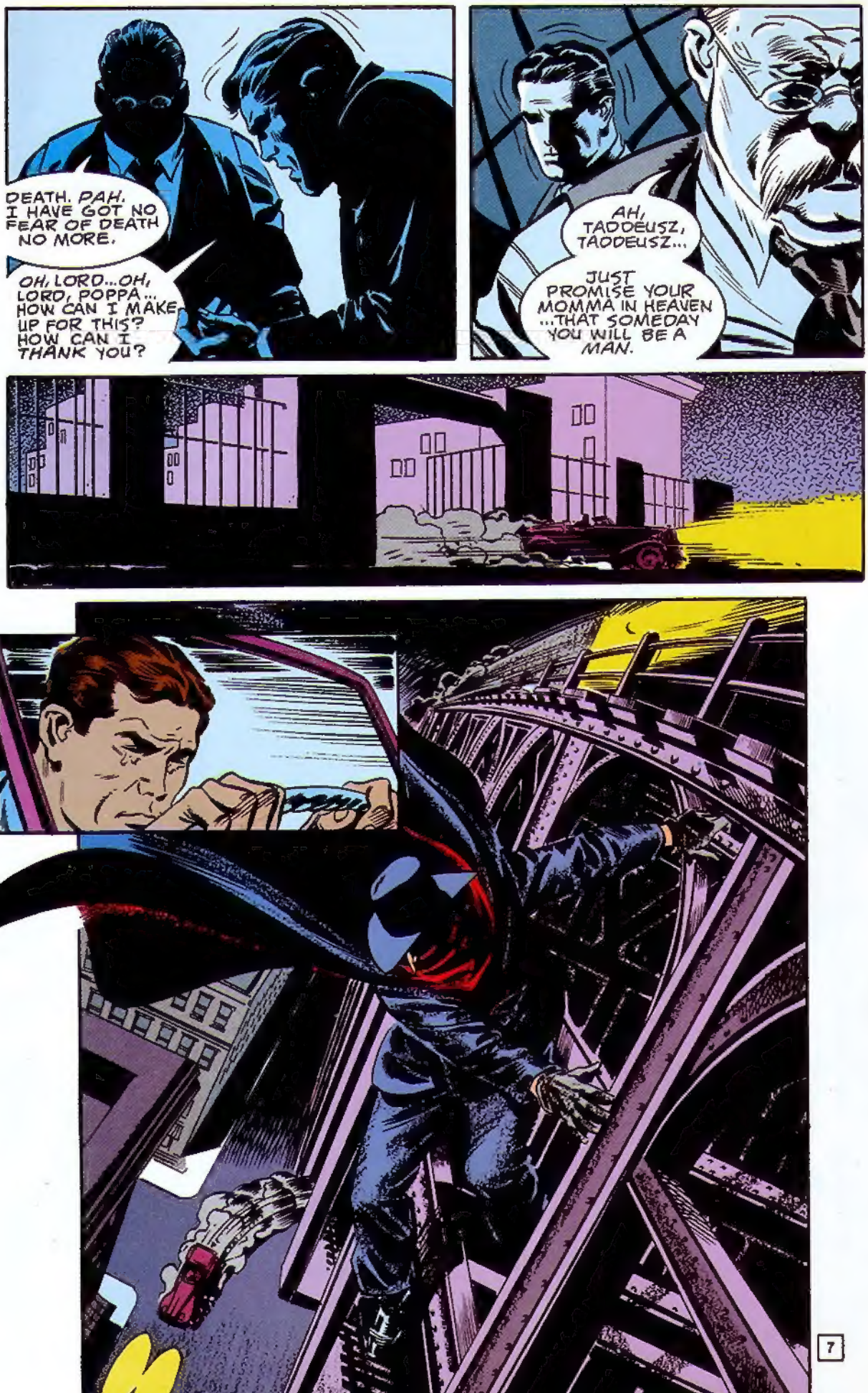
TAKE SOME ADVICE FROM A MASTER, SONNY. NEVER MESS WITH A MOUSE WHAT DOESN'T OWN A CAR. WHAT WITH THE ECONOMY AND ALL, NONE OF 'EM LIVES ALONE NO MORE.
SO IF YA WANT ANY PRIVACY... YA GET MY MEANIN'?
MAYBE IF YOU HIT ME WITH A BRICK, I'D HAVE AN EASIER TIME. NOW, I GOT SOME PICTURES HERE...
...OF TAD ROMANOWSKI, SON OF "STAN, THE SAUSAGE KING"...
3

...AND HIS FIANCEE, A SOCIETY SWEETIE NAMED BRENDA SHIELD. OF THOSE SHIELDS... LIKE THE CANNED HAMS.
THE POOP IS THAT TAD'S RUN UP A BIG... BIG... GAMBLING DEBT TO ONE GEORGIE KATOMERIS, OWNER OF THIS VERY NIGHTCLUB, AND STAKED HIS SHARE OF THE FAMILY FACTORY AGAINST IT.

YEAH, I'VE HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT THAT.
BUT WHY SHOULD I BE TELLIN' YOU ABOUT IT?
A RISING STAR LIKE YOU NEEDS PUBLICITY, JOEY. A FRIEND IN THE NEWS GAME COULD BE THE BEST FRIEND YOU EVER MADE.
CHICK--YOU'RE A GOOD EGG. I REMEMBER YOU WHEN I GOT MY OWN CLUB. PALAIS DE JOEY, I'M CALLIN' IT.
YA DON'T SAY.
NOW TELL ME IF YOU'VE SEEN THESE TWO. MARGO LANE AND JOE CARDONA, A SOCIETY GAL AND A COP FROM THE BIG APPLE... WORMING THEIR WAY INTO THE ROMANOWSKI BUSINESS...
NEVER SEEN 'EM.
I FIGURED. AND PEEP FOR SOMETHING ELSE WHILE YOU'RE AT IT.
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT THE MOB'S TIE TO THIS RACKET IS.
BUT I GUARANTEE YA--IF THERE'S A SWEET MOUSE LIKE HER IN CHI... SOONER OR LATER THE O'HARA PEEPERS ARE GONNA PEEP 'ER.
MOB TIES? IN THIS PLACE? DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH, PAL.
SAY, WHY ARE YOU SO HOT TO MILK THIS LITTLE-RICH-BOY-GETS-HOOKED BIT, ANYWAY?
NOT SURE MYSELF. BUT I'VE GOT THIS FEELING IN MY GUT THAT THERE'S SOMETHING BIG GOING ON HERE...SOMETHING MYSTERIOUS...
...SOMETHING EVEN I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
4

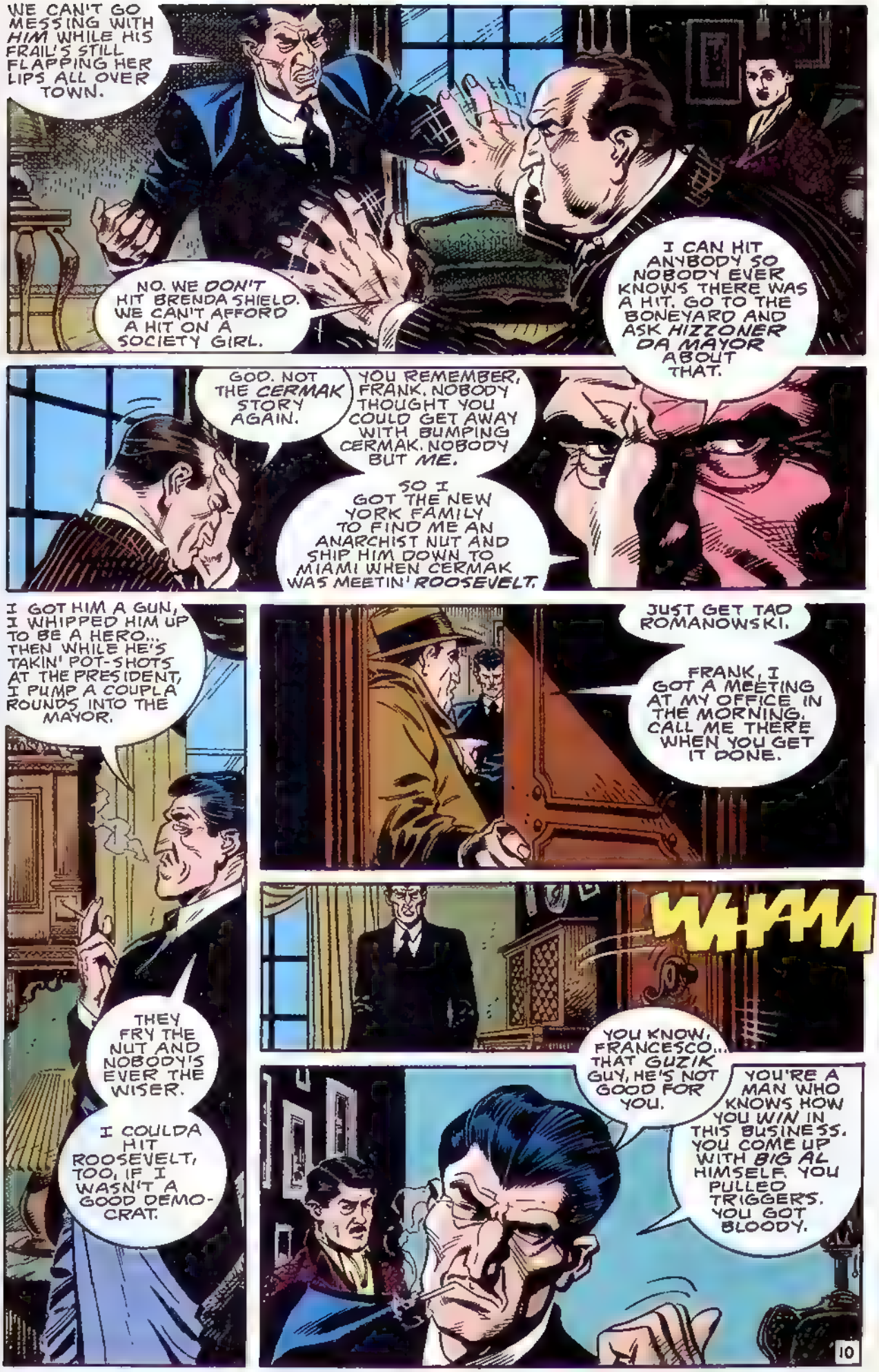
Butchers
DO YOU THINK I HAVE COME MERELY TO PROTECT YOU? OR YOUR SON? OR YOUR SAUSAGE WORKS?
THIS IS GREATER THAN US ALL. GREATER THAN ALL OF CHICAGO.
A THREAT LURKS AT THE DOOR OF EVERY MAN AND WOMAN IN AMERICA. NOW IS THE TIME TO TURN THAT THREAT AWAY, MR. ROMANOWSKI...
BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY WALTER GIBSON
GERARD JONES WRITER
EDUARDO BARRETO ARTIST
JOHN WORKMAN LETTERER
ANTHONY TOLLIN COLORIST
BRIAN AUGUSTYN BIG WIND OFF THE LAKE
THANKS TO MIKE GOLD


...YOU WILL LET ME HELP YOU.
NO!
I HELP MYSELF. I ALWAYS HELP MYSELF.
WHEN I CAME FROM POLAND WITH SIX DOLLARS IN MY POCKET, DID A STRANGER HELP ME THEN?
WHEN I WORK IN THE SLAUGHTER-HOUSES, DAY AND NIGHT, SAVING FOR MY BUTCHER SHOP...DID AN AMERICAN HELP ME THEN?
NO! AND NOBODY HELPS ME NOW!
I WILL RAISE THIS HALF-MILLION DOLLARS...MYSELF! I WILL PAY OFF THESE GAMBLERS... MYSELF!
AND I WILL OWE NOTHING ...TO NOBODY ...NOT EVEN YOU!
DO YOU OWE NOTHING TO THE WORLD?
THE CRIME SYNDICATES APPROACH A CROSSROADS. WILL THEY BE CHECKED--HELD TO THE FOUL COMMERCE WHICH THEY HAVE ALREADY MADE THEIR OWN?
OR WILL THEY SPREAD CANCEROUSLY THROUGH ALL INDUSTRY...
...UNTIL NO HONEST MAN IS BEYOND THEIR GRASP?
DIDN'T YOU HEAR MY FATHER? WE DON'T WANT YOUR TROUBLE. YOU'LL ONLY STIR THINGS UP...YOU'LL GET US KILLED!
THE FEAR OF DEATH IS THE SLAVE-MASTER'S FONDEST FRIEND.
6

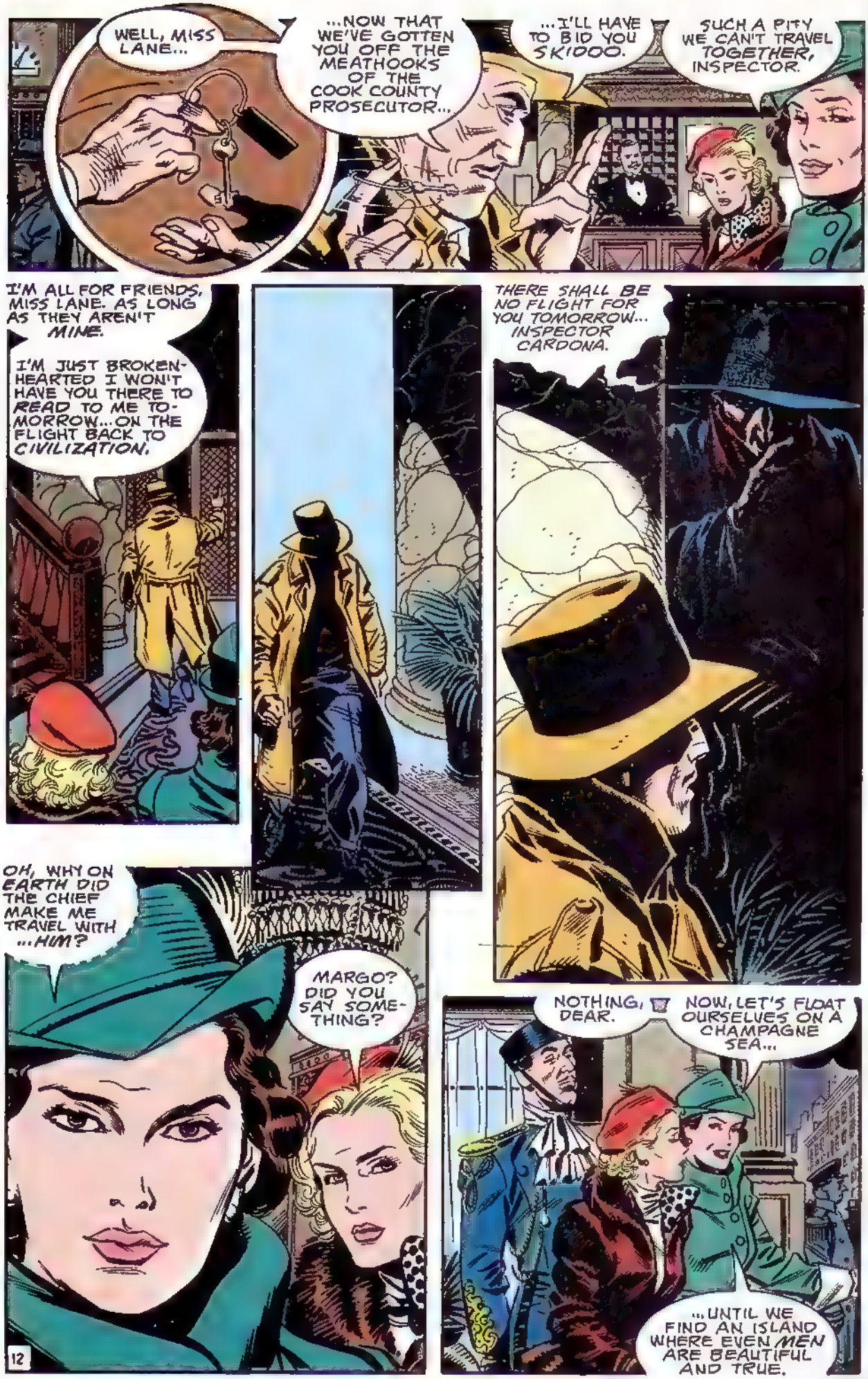

DEATH. PAH. I HAVE GOT NO FEAR OF DEATH NO MORE.
OH, LORD...OH, LORD, POPPA... HOW CAN I MAKE UP FOR THIS? HOW CAN I THANK YOU?
AH, TADDEUSZ, TADDEUSZ...
JUST PROMISE YOUR MOMMA IN HEAVEN ...THAT SOMEDAY YOU WILL BE A MAN.

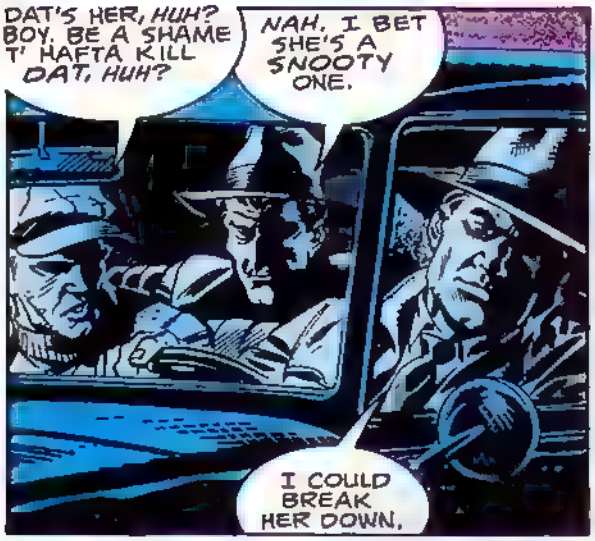
♪...YESSIR, THAT'S CHICAGO...♪
♪...THE TOWN THAT BAD OL' BILL-LY SUN-DAY JUST COULDN'T SHUT DOWN...♪
...JUST GIVE MY FATHER A COUPLE OF DAYS, GEORGIE. HE'S GOT DEBTS HE CAN CALL IN... AND LEASES HE CAN SELL...
HE'LL GET YOU YOUR MONEY, GEORGIE. THEN IT'S NO MORE GAMBLING FOR ME... FOREVER.

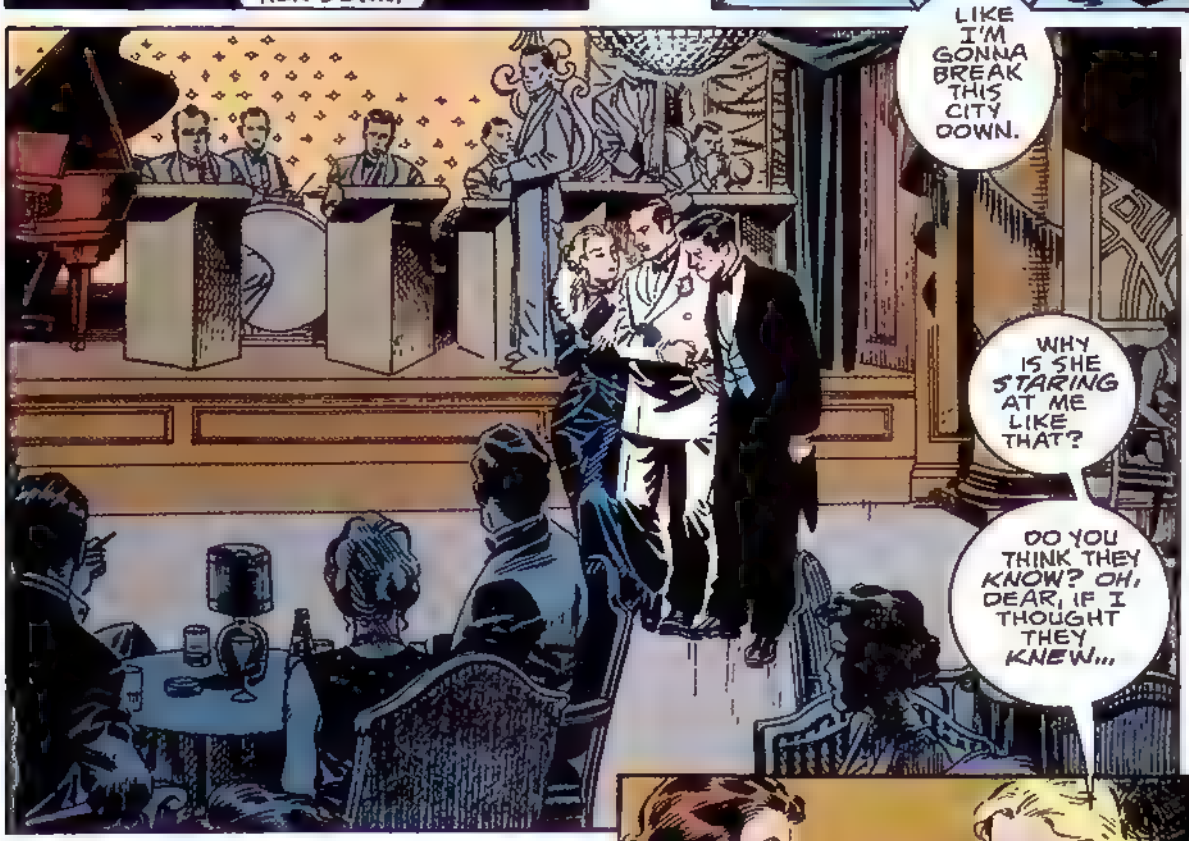
ALL... RIGHT, TAD. ALL RIGHT. YOU TELL HIM TO TRY GETTING THE MONEY...
...AND WE... WE OUGHTTA MAYBE TALK TO THE BOSSES...
...YOU THINK?
... A HALF-MIL IN CASH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "WHAT DO WE DO?"
WE TAKE IT!
NITTI, NITTI, WHAT ARE YOU THINKING OF? WITH CASH WE BUY WHAT? SOME POPPIES FROM TURKEY, MAYBE? WE SELL THEM FOR MORE CASH AND THEN WHAT?
WE'RE SPINNING OUR WHEELS IN NEUTRAL!
HOW MANY TIMES DO I TELL YOU, FRANK? IT'S A NEW WORLD FOR US NOW. THERE'S NO BUSINESS WE CAN'T GET INTO, IF WE PLAY IT RIGHT.
YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW. BUT IF THE FATHER PAYS US OFF, WE GOTTA LET GO OF THE SON AND THEN HOW DO WE GET INTO THIS PACKING GAME?
I THINK WE BOTH KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT.
HALF-STEP... BRING THE ROMANOWSKI BOY TO US.
9

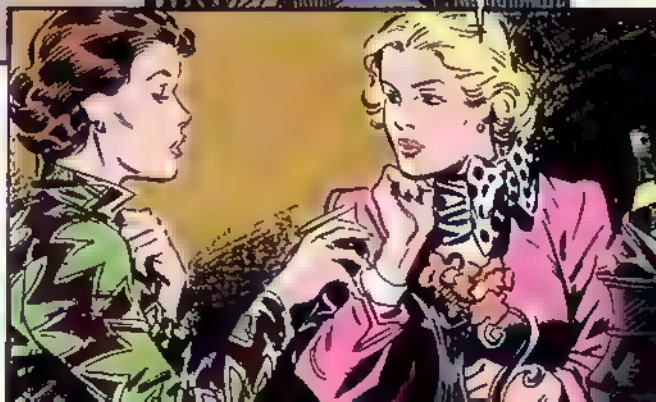

WE CAN'T GO MESSING WITH *HIM* WHILE HIS FRAIL'S STILL FLAPPING HER LIPS ALL OVER TOWN.
NO. WE *DON'T* HIT BRENDA SHIELD. WE CAN'T AFFORD A HIT ON A SOCIETY GIRL.
I CAN HIT ANYBODY SO NOBODY EVER KNOWS THERE WAS A HIT. GO TO THE BONEYARD AND ASK *HIZZONER DA MAYOR* ABOUT THAT.
GOD. NOT THE *CERMAK* STORY AGAIN.
YOU REMEMBER, FRANK. NOBODY THOUGHT YOU COULD GET AWAY WITH BUMPING CERMAK. NOBODY BUT *ME.*
SO I GOT THE NEW YORK FAMILY TO FIND ME AN ANARCHIST NUT AND SHIP HIM DOWN TO MIAMI WHEN CERMAK WAS MEETIN' *ROOSEVELT.*
I GOT HIM A GUN, I WHIPPED HIM UP TO BE A HERO... THEN WHILE HE'S TAKIN' POT-SHOTS AT THE PRESIDENT, I PUMP A COUPLA ROUNDS INTO THE MAYOR.
JUST GET TAO ROMANOWSKI.
FRANK, I GOT A MEETING AT MY OFFICE IN THE MORNING. CALL ME THERE WHEN YOU GET IT DONE.
WHAM
THEY FRY THE NUT AND NOBODY'S EVER THE WISER.
I COULDA HIT ROOSEVELT, TOO, IF I WASN'T A GOOD DEMO-CRAT.
YOU KNOW, FRANCESCO... THAT *GUZIK* GUY, HE'S NOT GOOD FOR YOU.
YOU'RE A MAN WHO KNOWS HOW YOU *WIN* IN THIS BUSINESS. YOU COME UP WITH *BIG AL* HIMSELF. YOU PULLED TRIGGERS. YOU GOT BLOODY.

GUZIK, WHAT DOES HE KNOW? THEY CALL HIM "GREASY-THUMB" 'CAUSE ALL HE EVER DONE WAS COUNT MONEY.
MONEY'S *IMPORTANT*, ANTONIO.
DO WHAT'S GOTTA BE DONE...AND THE MONEY FOLLOWS. THAT'S WHAT I SAY.
WITH BIG AL ON THE ROCK NOW, WE GOTTA BE CAREFUL THE WRONG KINDA PEOPLE DON'T TAKE OVER THE BUSINESS.
WE GOTTA STICK TOGETHER NOW, FRANCESCO.
HERE...I GOT A LITTLE SOMETHING I KNOW YOU'LL LIKE. JUST DROP BY THIS ADDRESS... OR CALL THIS NUMBER...
TAKE IT FROM ME, IT'S THE BEST. HELL, I'D KILL HER BEFORE I LET ANY *OTHER* BOZO NEAR HER.
BUT FOR YOU, *FRATELLO*... NOTHING'S TOO GOOD.


WELL, MISS LANE...
...NOW THAT WE'VE GOTTEN YOU OFF THE MEATHOOKS OF THE COOK COUNTY PROSECUTOR...
...I'LL HAVE TO BID YOU SK1000.
SUCH A PITY WE CAN'T TRAVEL TOGETHER, INSPECTOR.
I'M ALL FOR FRIENDS, MISS LANE. AS LONG AS THEY AREN'T MINE.
I'M JUST BROKEN-HEARTED I WON'T HAVE YOU THERE TO READ TO ME TOMORROW...ON THE FLIGHT BACK TO CIVILIZATION.
THERE SHALL BE NO FLIGHT FOR YOU TOMORROW... INSPECTOR CARDONA.
OH, WHY ON EARTH DID THE CHIEF MAKE ME TRAVEL WITH ...HIM?
MARGO? DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?
NOTHING, DEAR.
NOW, LET'S FLOAT OURSELVES ON A CHAMPAGNE SEA...
...UNTIL WE FIND AN ISLAND WHERE EVEN MEN ARE BEAUTIFUL AND TRUE.



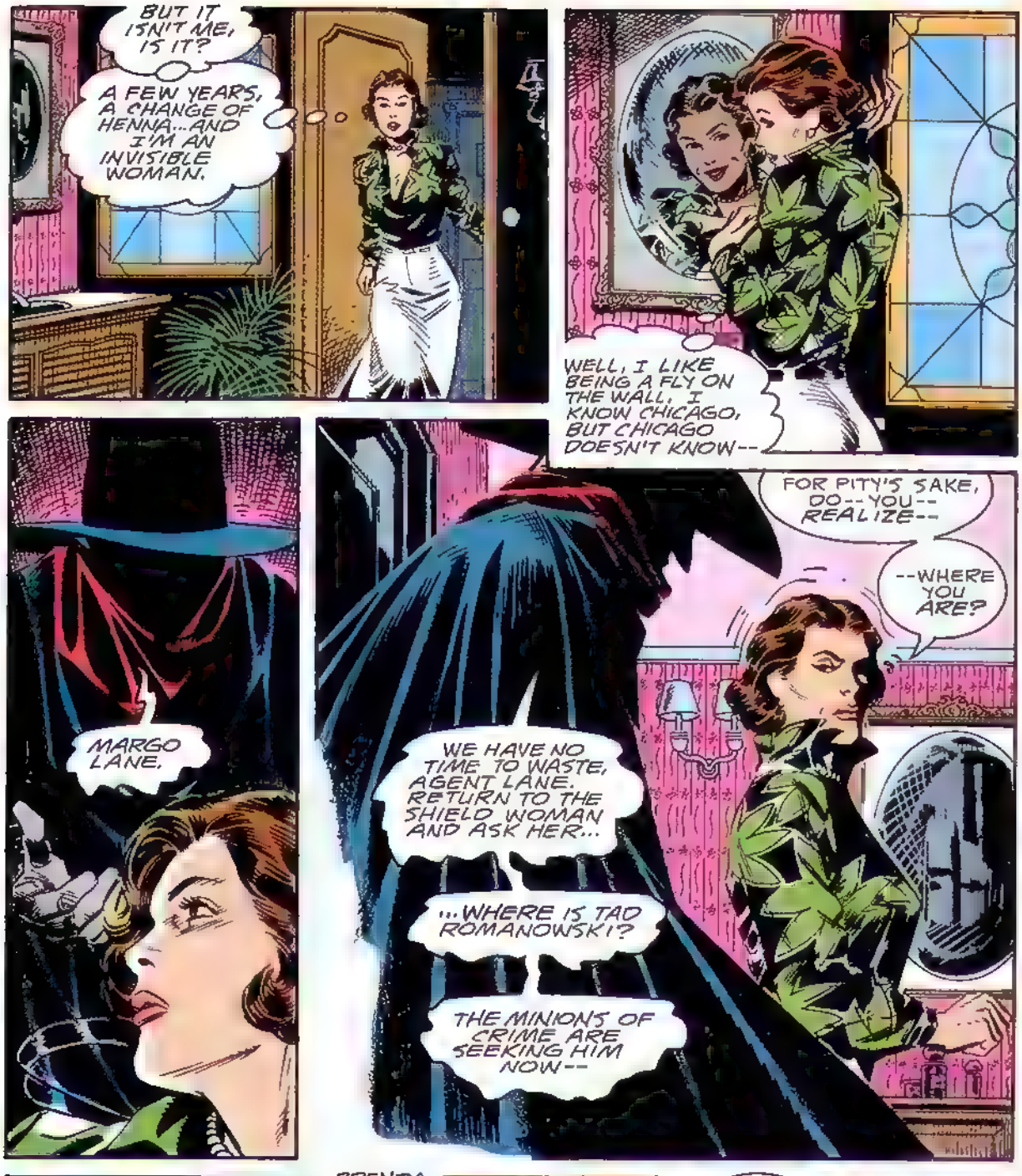




MISTER AND MRS. BLAINE HARTE. A MANU-FACTURING HEIR, AS I RECALL.

NOT THAT HE'D EVER WORK AT ANYTHING MORE DIFFICULT THAN HIS TENNIS SERVE.

... HIS PET CHARITIES INCLUDE SAUCER-EYED CHORUS GIRLS, WHOSE PICTURES HE SHOWS TO THE BOYS AT THE CLUB.
SHE ENDURES THE HUMILIATION WITH THE HELP OF A DOCTOR WHOSE BEDSIDE MANNER IS AS SOOTHING AS HIS SUPPLY OF LAUDANUM.
AND YET THEIR DIS-APPROVAL COULD RUIN YOU AND TAD.
HOW DO YOU... HOW DO YOU...
OLD MARGO KNOWS EVERY-THING, DEAR.
THE HARTES WERE THE FIRST TO OPEN THEIR DOOR TO ME WHEN MY HUSBAND WAS INTRODUC-ING ME TO SOCIETY.
AND THE FIRST TO CLOSE IT WHEN DICK RAN INTO TROUBLE.
OH, MARGO!
I COULDN'T SURVIVE THAT... I... I'M NOT AS STRONG AS YOU...
...I COULDN'T CHANGE MY NAME AND START AGAIN LIKE YOU... I'D...
EASY, NOW... IT'S... PROBABLY ME THEY'RE STARING AT... YOU'LL SEE THAT RIGHT NOW.
YOU KNOW, I BELIEVE I'VE FINALLY DISCOVERED WHY WOMEN NEED MEN.
WITHOUT THEM, WE CAN'T GO GOSSIP IN THE POWDER ROOM AND STILL KEEP OUR TABLE.
I'LL HURRY BACK.

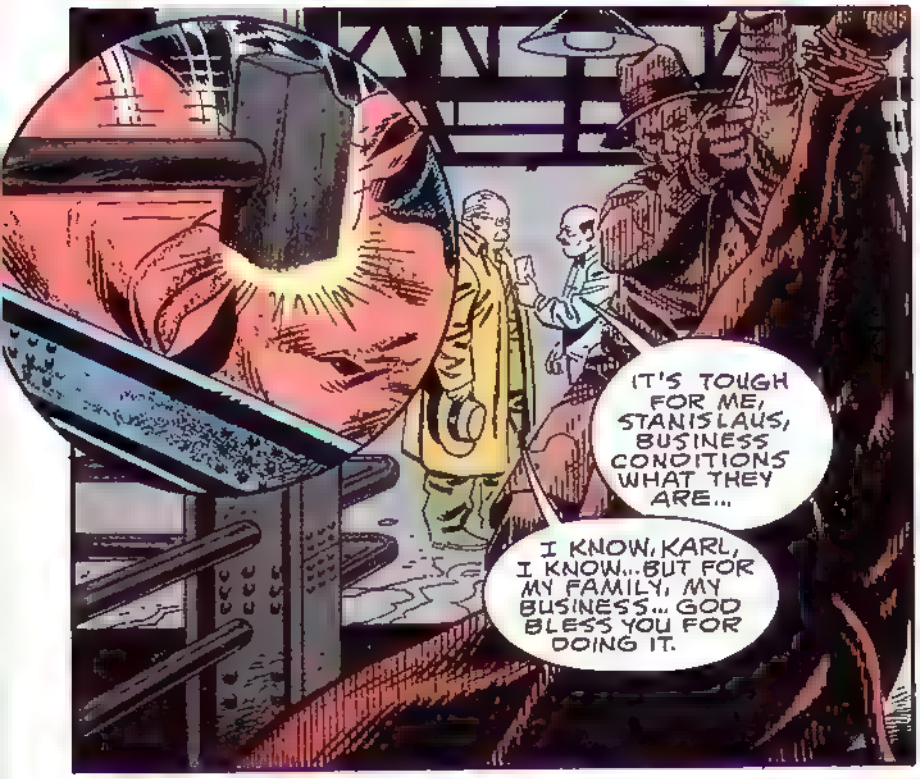

BUT IT ISN'T ME, IS IT?
A FEW YEARS, A CHANGE OF HENNA...AND I'M AN INVISIBLE WOMAN.
WELL, I LIKE BEING A FLY ON THE WALL. I KNOW CHICAGO, BUT CHICAGO DOESN'T KNOW--
MARGO LANE.
FOR PITY'S SAKE, DO--YOU-- REALIZE--
--WHERE YOU ARE?
WE HAVE NO TIME TO WASTE, AGENT LANE. RETURN TO THE SHIELD WOMAN AND ASK HER...
...WHERE IS TAD ROMANOWSKI?
THE MINIONS OF CRIME ARE SEEKING HIM NOW--
--WE MUST FIND HIM FIRST!
BRENDA, DARLING, I HAVE TO ASK YOU...
BRENDA?
THEY KNOW.
THEY KNOW! EVERYBODY ...EVERY-BODY...

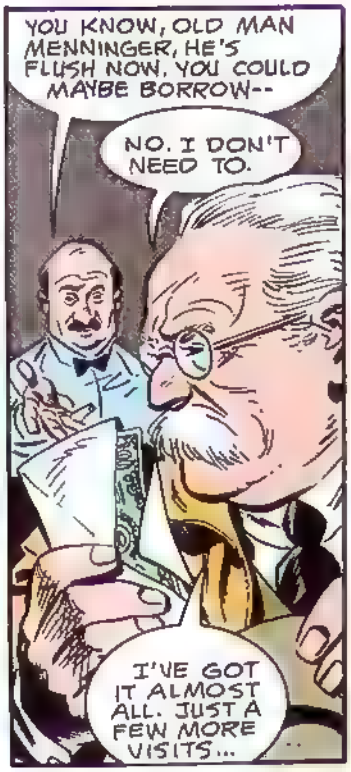
TAD'S FATHER WAS CALLING AROUND TO RAISE MONEY...
...AND IT... IT CAME OUT... ABOUT TAD'S GAMBLING AND THE MOBSTERS AND...
...AND MRS. HARTE SAYS THAT DADDY... DADDY'S TOLD EVERYONE...
...OUR ENGAGEMENT IS OFF! I CAN'T MARRY HIM, MARGO!
OH, I WANT TO DIE... I JUST WANT TO DIE...
SHH, HONEY, DON'T MAKE WISHES LIKE THAT...
SOMETIMES THEY COME TRUE.
NOTHING.
I EVEN SCAMMED THAT LOUSY NEWSHOUND-- HECK-- INTO SNIFFING AROUND. HE'S GOT A PIPELINE INTO THE GAMBLING JOINT-- BUT NO LEADS.
THEN WE MUST GO ON SEARCHING.
I MUST SPEAK WITH ROMANOWSKI... BEFORE HE FALLS AGAIN INTO GANGLAND'S GRASP.
16

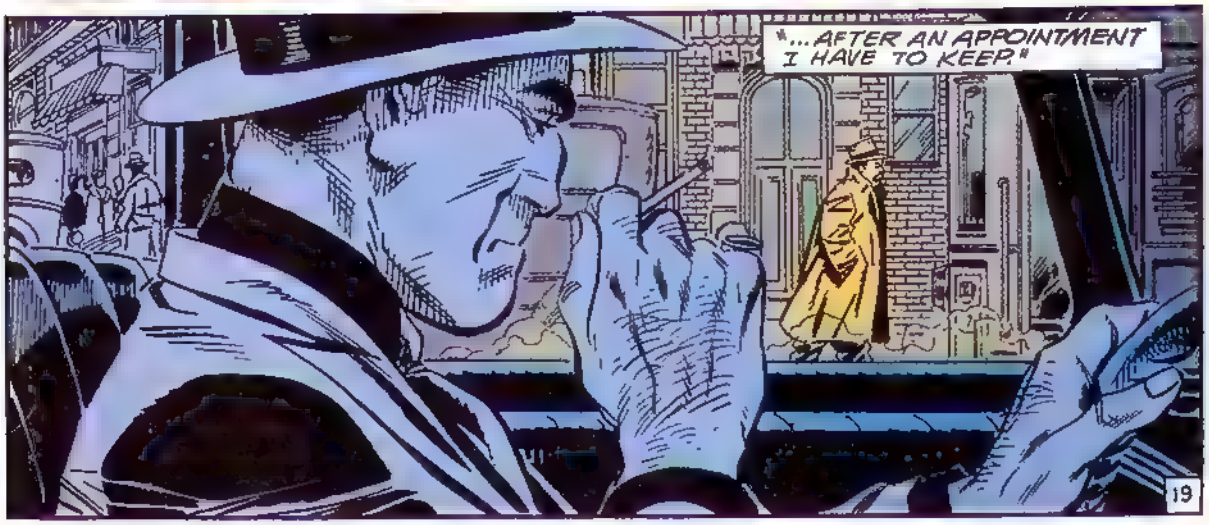
DRY YOUR TEARS, SONNY...
...YOU GOT A MEETING TO ATTEND.
MMM... I LIKE YOU, FRANK... YOU'RE CLASS.
BETTER THAN HALF-- STEP?
ARE YOU KIDDIN'? HE HITS ME. HE--
RAP! RAP! RAP!
YOU THE MAN WHO ORDERED A SACK O' HUMAN GARBAGE?

THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO DO, KID.
YOU'RE RUINED IN SOCIETY. YOU LOST YOUR GIRL... AND YOUR BIG IN WITH THE SHIELD COMPANY.
NOT AN ICECUBE'S CHANCE THAT YOUR OLD MAN'LL COME UP WITH THAT MONEY NOW.
JUST SIGN THE PAPER. NO MORE DEBT. NO NOTHING.
AND WE'LL LOOK AFTER YOU. WE'RE GOOD TO OUR PARTNERS.
ATTABOY
NOW COME ON. WE'LL GET SOME BREAKFAST AND WE'LL GET THAT SUIT CLEANED...
WHAT ARE YOU DOIN' HERE?
BUT... ANTHONY ...YOU TOLD ME...
I TOLD YOU.
I TOLD YOU.
YOU... COULDA SAID NO.

YOU COULDA SAID NO!

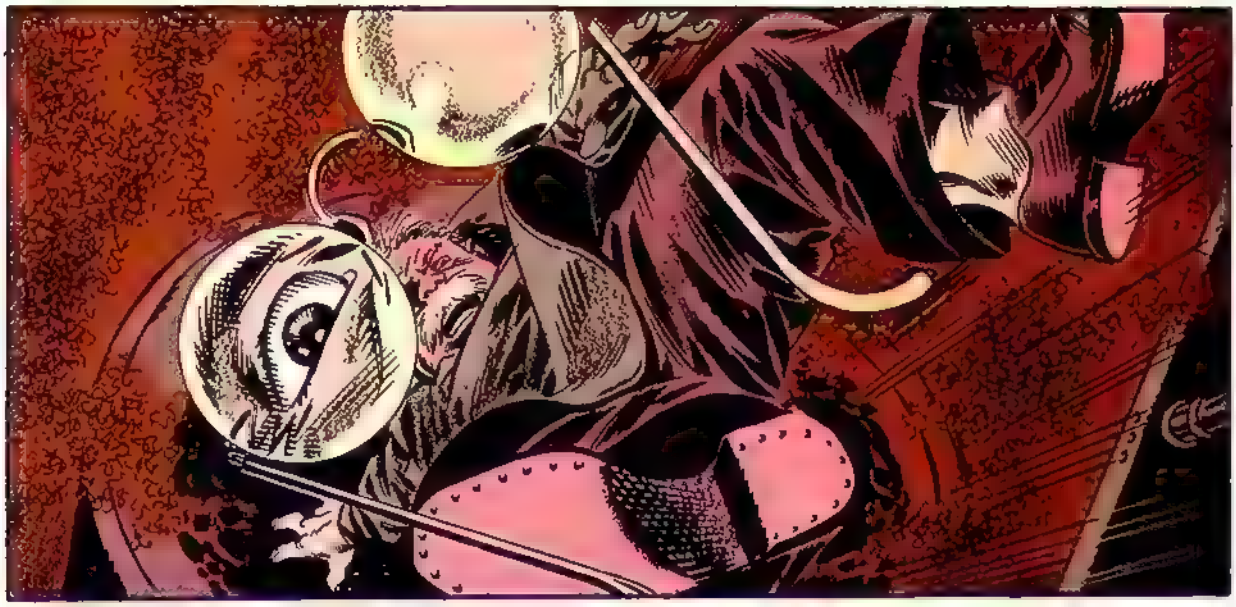

IT'S TOUGH FOR ME, STANISLAUS, BUSINESS CONDITIONS WHAT THEY ARE...
I KNOW, KARL, I KNOW...BUT FOR MY FAMILY, MY BUSINESS... GOD BLESS YOU FOR DOING IT.


YOU KNOW, OLD MAN MENNINGER, HE'S FLUSH NOW, YOU COULD MAYBE BORROW--
NO. I DON'T NEED TO.
I'VE GOT IT ALMOST ALL. JUST A FEW MORE VISITS...


"...AFTER AN APPOINTMENT I HAVE TO KEEP."

HA HA HA HA
HAHA HA
AH, TAD! TAD, YOU'RE A WONDER! OH, I WISH I COULD SEE HIS FACE! I WISH I COULD...
...SEE...
WHOSE FACE DO YOU WISH TO SEE, TADDEUSZ ROMANOWSKI? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
I SHOULD JUST THROW YOU OUT, YOU KNOW.
BUT I'M A BIT TOO PLEASED WITH MYSELF NOT TO TELL YOU. A MR. FRANK NITTI CAJOLED ME INTO SIGNING OVER MY SHARE OF THE ROMANOWSKI SAUSAGE COMPANY TO HIM TODAY...
WHAT THE POOR FOOL DOESN'T KNOW, EVIDENTLY, IS THAT I DON'T OWN A DROP OF THE COMPANY UNTIL POPPA PASSES ON!
AND POPPA... IS A HARDY OLD DUCK... CLEVER LITTLE TAD SHOULD HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO OUTFOX THEM.
CLEVER TAD.
YOU HAVE FAR LESS TIME THAN YOU DREAM.

NO EMPLOYEES HERE YET?
THEY DON'T COME FOR ANOTHER HALF-HOUR. YOU DON'T KNOW THAT?
GUESS I FORGOT. AND THOSE ARE THE VATS, HUH? YOU BOIL MEAT DOWN IN THERE OR SOME-THING?
WE REDUCE BY-PRODUCTS THERE, HOW CAN YOU ASK THIS? YOU ARE AN FDA INSPECTOR OR NOT?
I BEEN OFF THE JOB A WHILE.
YOU WERE HURT, I THINK. YOUR LEG...
YEAH. INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT.



BLOOSH

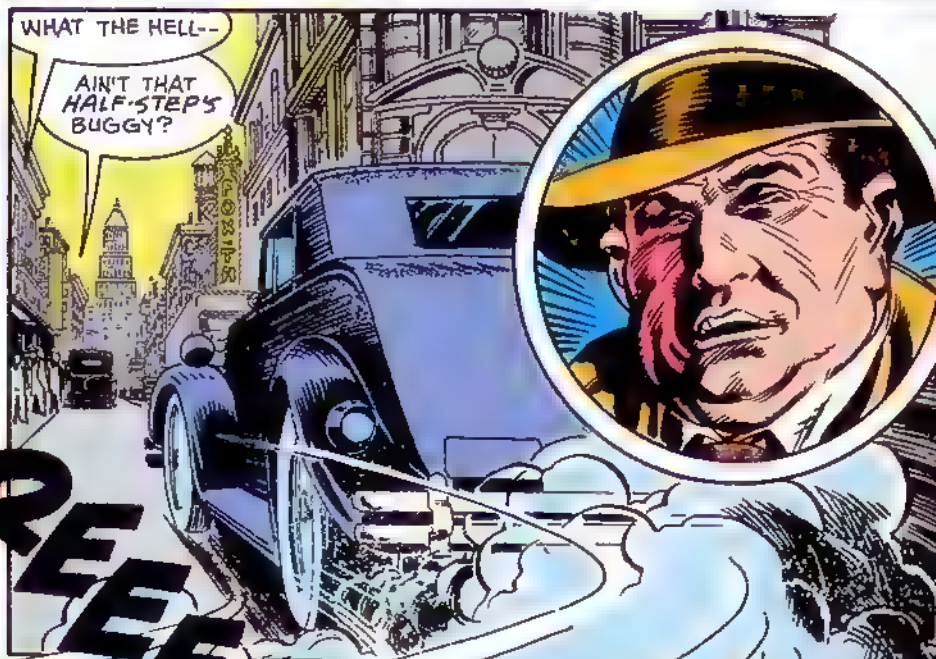
YOU GOTTA WATCH THOSE INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS.

HE OWED NO ONE ANYTHING.

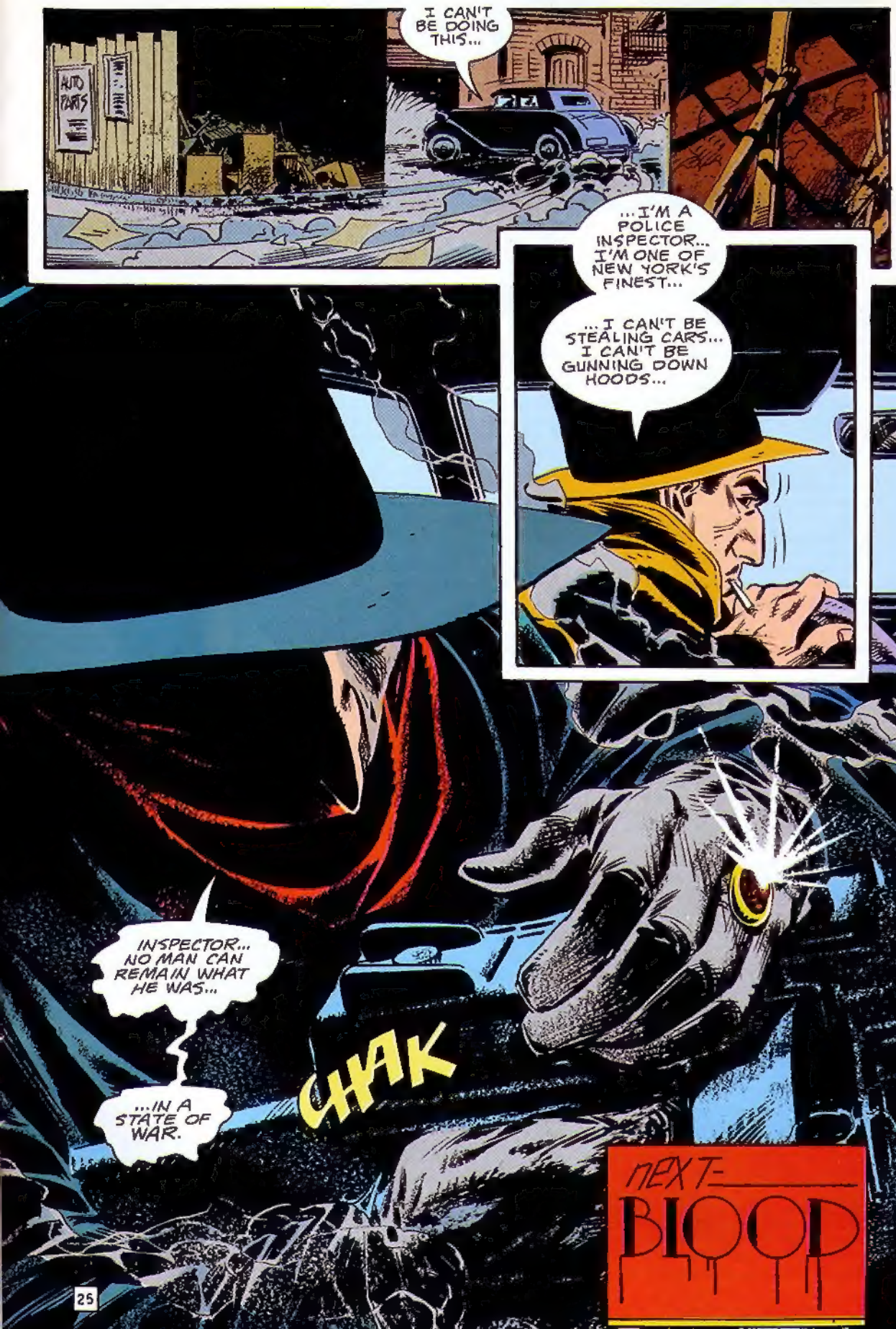
BUT NOW THEY OWE HIM... JUSTICE.
THEY PREYED UPON A YOUNG MAN'S WEAKNESSES... AND UPON AN OLD MAN'S. NOW WE, INSPECTOR...
WE SHALL PREY UPON THEIRS.

MORNING, MR. GUZIK.

EVERYBODY HERE? I THINK WE'RE GOING TO HAVE SOME NEGOTIATING TO --
23


WHAT THE HELL--
AIN'T THAT HALF-STEP'S BUGGY?
SCREEE

TAKKA TAKKA TAKKA
TAKKA
TAKKA
TAKKA
CHK
CHK
PRA
CHK
AK
HUFF.. HUFF..
CHK
SPRAK
HALF-STEP ...?
HALF-STEP.
NITTI.
24


AUTO PARTS
I CAN'T BE DOING THIS...
...I'M A POLICE INSPECTOR... I'M ONE OF NEW YORK'S FINEST...
...I CAN'T BE STEALING CARS... I CAN'T BE GUNNING DOWN HOODS...
INSPECTOR... NO MAN CAN REMAIN WHAT HE WAS...
...IN A STATE OF WAR.
CHAK
NEXT- BLOOD

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WEB OF THE MOB

by Mike Gold

Here in America, we're pretty quick to grind out myths. Thanks to the popular media, the gangland activities of Al Capone's Chicago seem almost romantic.

Of course, reality is a bit more gritty than myth. After all, the machine-gun-toting lugs of the so-called Windy City were lawbreakers at the very least and murderers at the worst.

Their impact upon the city's reputation is immense: to this day, one can travel to virtually any major city in the world, mention the name "Chicago" to a complete stranger who has no understanding of the English language, and observe a friendly smile and machine-gun-like hand gestures, accompanied by the international "rat-a-tat-tat."

Most television shows and movies like *The Untouchables*, and the sundry Capone sagas, grossly fictionalized history—the notable exception being Roger Corman's film *The St. Valentine's Day Massacre*. But truth, as they say, is stranger than fiction ... or at least, it's a lot more compelling.

Toward the end of the 19th century, things were truly getting out of hand. Mike McDonald was getting along in years, and the boys in the back rooms were beginning to think they should break up one of the mightiest socio-economic cartels of all time. At that very moment, King Mike was in complete control of Chicago's political machine and most of the city's organized crime.

For the first time in memory, the political and social reformers were being taken seriously, and if they were successful, a whole lot of people would lose a whole lot of money. The political and the gambling and prostitution interests had to be divorced.

The art of persuasion was (and still is) a big deal in this "Windy City." Indeed, that very appellation comes *not* from Chicago's climate—the city is merely the nation's 13th windiest (and, indeed, in a four-way tie for *that* great honor)—but from the citizenry's gift for out-and-out *bluster*. But the boys could not bluster their way out of the reformer's zeal, and King Mike would have to retire.

In those days, Chicago was America's tollgate—by ship via the seaway and the Great Lakes, or by railroad, anybody going just about anywhere long-distance from east to west had to change trains or ships in Chicago. During their stopover, people wanted to stretch their legs, see a show or two, and have a couple of nice meals.

To nobody's surprise, it seems that many visitors and natives alike wanted to indulge in a bit of gambling. Indeed, some of these folks had no qualms about offering temporary employment to the city's thousands of prostitutes, many of whom plied their trade in the mob-owned houses of ill repute that were located in or near the mob-owned gambling dens. It is no coincidence that the majority of these places were located in the levee district that was within a short cab ride of the train and ship terminals.

Indeed, since Chicago was a major port and housed the famed stock yards, a lot of shippers, farmers and cattlemen made routine trips to that toddlin' town, and the mob had what it took to compete for their entertainment dollar as well.

McDonald retired in good health, and—ultimately—control of the mob passed on to restaurateur Big Jim Colosimo. Big Jim held tight reins on those interests for some time, but as the 1920s began to roar, he turned a deaf ear to the desires of his lieutenants, which fostered a certain sense of competitiveness within the rank-and-file.

The opportunity of coordinating the booming illegal alcohol trade was not lost on the organization-oriented Johnny Torrio, a former New Yorker who had an astonishing impact on the bottom line of Colosimo's whorehouses. So while working in his restaurant one day, Big Jim went to the lobby to await a confederate and rapidly found himself kissing the floor in a pool of his own blood. The shooter was believed to be a stocky, scarfaced newcomer from New York.

In any event, control of the mob passed from the late restaurateur to "Organization Man" Torrio, who proceeded to set up a city-wide structure that linked all the local families and their sundry alcohol interests, ranging from apartment-oriented bathtub stills to larger clandestine beer breweries, to massive fleets of trucks, ships and other tools of importation.

In the ensuing years, Torrio had locked up virtually all the booze, gambling and prostitution trade under his umbrella ... except for the operations run by certain North Side interests. Things got a little hot and mob warfare was declared. As the body count escalated, Torrio thought he might be better off someplace else. In point of fact, he was quite the family man, and he left town with his family's best interests in mind. For a murderer, a pimp and a bootlegger, he was quite a considerate chap.

This is not to say that Johnny Torrio abandoned his interests: there are those who believe that he still called the most important shots in Chicago; clearly, he maintained a lot of influence. It is known that his gift for organization was put to full use, as he was the man who pulled together what is referred to as the Cosa Nostra, the organization of mob families across the nation.

Back in Chicago, day-to-day control of the mob passed on to a buddy of Torrio's, a stocky, bullheaded man who could handle the violent mob war that was both entertaining and terrorizing the city. Publicly known under the secret identity of Al Brown, the owner of a levee district antique shop located near Colosimo's restaurant, the newspapers referred to him under his real name: Al Capone.

The scarfaced Capone was brought into the mob by Torrio and, after doing him that little favor in Big Jim's lobby, he was rewarded with control of his own whorehouse in the district. Whereas Capone remained cognizant of his family obligations, it appears likely that it was during his days as an entertainment manager that he picked up a social disease that was to destroy him in later life.

In taking over the mob, Capone maintained the careful political connections that dated back to McDonald's days. He continued the fight with the North Side mob—he had little choice, really—but he proved his worth as a peacemaker by negotiating a unique and typically Capone-like settlement.

Taking another cue from Torrio, "Scarface Al" imported a couple of hitmen, had a couple of guys dress up as Chicago policemen, had the phoney cops march into a garage owned by the North Side mob, and had the cops line the Northsiders up against a wall. The hitmen proceeded to render their autographs in machine-gun fire across the backs of the Northsiders.

Capone had everything planned down to the smallest detail. Indeed, Al was playing cards with a local chief of police in his Florida retreat at the time of the murders. But as fate would have it, Capone had two problems with the hit. "Bugs" Moran, the big man behind the North Side mob, wasn't there at the time. In point of fact, he was walking to the garage with his bodyguard, saw the police wagon in front of the garage, and decided to stop for a spot of breakfast until the heat disappeared. Whereas the hated Moran was spared, he no longer was a bother for Capone—prudent man that he was, "Bugs" decided to retire. It

was an inspiring way to celebrate St. Valentine's Day, 1929.

No one was ever convicted of the crime.

The second problem was more troublesome: after a while the two hitmen, with some assistance, decided they would be better caretakers of the mob's interests. Capone got wind of the plot and, at the end of a testimonial dinner for the gentlemen, proceeded to bash their brains out with a baseball bat ... giving new meaning to the phrase "just desserts."

Capone now ruled something that was more than a mob—it was a virtual conglomerate, controlling booze, gambling, prostitution, loan sharking, and business protection throughout the midwest, with connections—via Torrio—all over the nation.

The outfit's structure was more akin to the military: Capone was on top with, arguably, a nationwide boss of bosses above him. But the national superstructure worked on an advisory level, mediating disputes and planning sundry forms of business expansion. Capone's lieutenants were more likely to be responsible for family or precinct-oriented turf than for certain types of activities.

Torpedoes—who often doubled as drivers—were under the lieutenants, but since they took the most risky jobs, they commanded a lot of respect from the rank-and-file and thus were in a good political position for personal advancement. Bagmen and sundry errand boy soldiers worked the streets, took the betting slips, worked in the houses and horse parlors, and provided routine muscle.

Frank "The Enforcer" Nitti, as dapper a guy as you would want to meet, was Capone's security chief and his ace lieutenant. Jacob "Greasy Thumb" Guzik was the accountant, the man who managed the purse-strings. Like Torrio and, to a certain extent, Capone, Guzik was a family man as well.

(It should be noted that calling one of these gentlemen "King Mike," "Big Jim," "Scarface Al," "Bugs," "The Enforcer," "Greasy Thumb," or whatever was not the least bit conducive to one's health. Providing—and using—such names solely was in the domain of the press.)

A few years after the St. Valentine's Day consolidation, Al Capone went to jail on a federal tax rap—something unique to its time. The lesson wasn't lost on Guzik. Whereas Al was able to call some shots from prison—while he was in Atlanta; his later move to Alcatraz mitigated against such extra-curricular activity—the Nitti/Guzik team took control.

There was some rivalry between the two. While Nitti had the upper hand, Guzik had learned from Capone's conviction and tried to make the mob tax-proof by moving it into "straight" businesses, both for investment and for money laundering. Nitti's background was in the enforcement area, so he has a tendency to be involved in the more aggressive pursuits.

Both men managed the outfit's future with appropriate care. But clearly, the long-term future in the post-Prohibition environment was in the more subtle concerns.

There was both the desire and the need to replace the income that was brought in by booze and beer. Nationally, the mobs clearly saw the end of Prohibition coming with the election of Roosevelt, and despite this, a great many outfits helped get out the vote for FDR.

There were many opportunities to muscle in to "legitimate" businesses and unions. The mobs could employ some of their most traditional tactics, those that dated back to the Black Hand days at the turn of the century—acquiring business interests by force, intimidation and blackmail. Gambling and prostitution, the outfit's most valued stock in trade, could ruin a businessman's image in the community and ruin his marriage—which, in turn, would ruin his business.

Control also could be established through straightforward investments that would squeeze out legitimate owners: during the Depression, stock was cheap and financing was needed by many. Many small businessmen couldn't get loans from banks, and, in desperation, they went to the mob's loan sharks. There, money was plentiful, but the interest rates were exorbitant. Most businessmen couldn't keep up on the interest—the "juice"—let alone pay back the loan itself. With their businesses as collateral, they saw the fruit of their life's labor slip over to mob ownership.

There were a great many reasons behind the mob's desire for legitimacy. First and foremost, there was the profit motive: these businesses made money, and could make more if supplied and serviced by other mob-owned business.

Further, there was an understandable desire on the part of many old-timers for respectability—if not for themselves, then for their sons: you can't leave the family business as part of an inheritance.

Finally, owning legitimate businesses provided the opportunity for "money laundering" operations that were desperately needed by the outfit. Ever since the Internal Revenue Service sent Capone to jail for failure to pay income tax, organized crime needed real-world operations that would generate cash income. Even if the business lost money, the mob could funnel cash from gambling, prostitution, and their other receiptless pursuits and leave a paper trail for the IRS—thereby accounting for the source of their income. After all, a top-ranking mobster could hardly put "hitman" on his 1040 form.

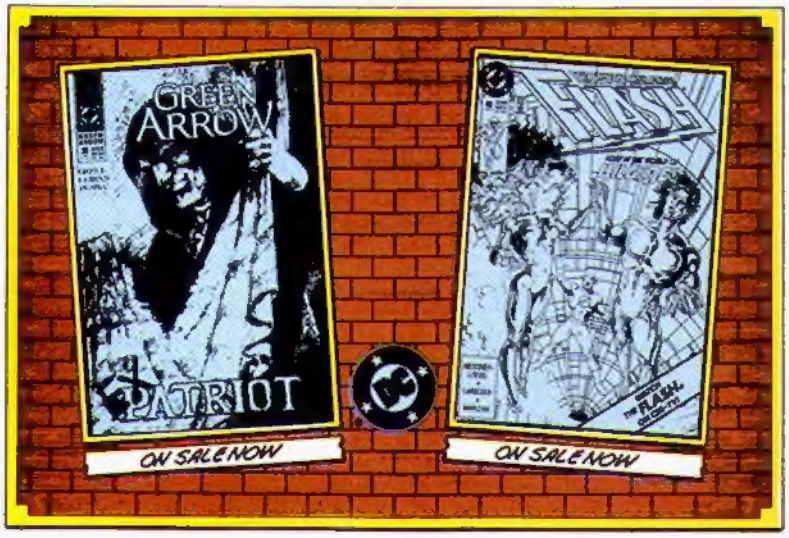
In the post-Capone era, there was a need for men like Jacob Guzik and his successors. With cooperation proving more profitable than bloody mob wars, Frank Nitti became something of a quaint relic.

In 1943, an aging Nitti stared squeamishly at an indictment for labor racketeering—in Hollywood, of all places. The mob felt that Frank had evolved into something more than a quaint relic. He became a liability.

One morning, Frank left his west suburban home for a walk. Several hours later, his body was found with five bulletholes in his hat—which was still attached to his head. Only three bullets had been fired from his gun.

No one could ever be convicted of the crime.

It was ruled a suicide.

—Mike Gold

(Group editor and Director of Development for DC Comics, Mike Gold is well versed in Chicago history, having written numerous articles on the subject and having served as a research associate on the first three of Max Allan Collins's best-selling Nate Heller detective novels, set in the Nitti/Guzik period.)